Facebook General Info

Facebook requires users to enter their real birthday. If they're under 13, they won't be allowed to sign up. If they're between 13 and 18, they will have some special protections just for minors. When you set up a new Facebook account, one of the first things you're asked to do is enter your full date of birth, including year. This is the only time that's required, and we recommend that it's the only time teens provide their birth year, whether asked for it or not. **We strongly recommend against people lying about their age when they setup their account. There are both legal and child-development reasons why Facebook restricts membership to people 13 and older. In addition to complying with U.S. law, Facebook has created an environment designed only for teens and adults. The rules, policies, protections and safety education that Facebook has in place are all designed for people 13 and older.**

Having said that, we need to face reality. A July 2010 survey found that 37% of U.S. 10-to-12-year-olds were on Facebook, which means that every one of these children had to lie about their age to get on the service. Adults can discuss how good or bad this is for children, but it has become a fact of life we all face.

If you have children under 13 who are on the service, we recommend that they cancel their accounts and that you encourage them to use more age- appropriate services. But if they are going to continue despite the site's restrictions, it's even more important to help them configure their privacy settings to the most restrictive level possible, and be sure to "friend" them or otherwise monitor their online use